

Equality Plan

It is our common cause to promote equality within the Red Cross.

Introduction

This is the Finnish Red Cross's Equality Plan for 2016–2019, and its purpose is to steer the enhancement of equality on a national level. This is an updated version of the Plan, approved by the organisation's board on 14 March 2011. The updates were made by the headquarters' HR unit. Feedback was requested from staff members for the updates, but only less than 10 people responded. The headquarters' cooperation and workers' protection committees took part in making the updates, and individual districts may also work together with their employees to draw up their own equality plans that meet a specific district's needs when it comes to improving equality.

We will analyse the level of equality in 2017. An employee analysis will be conducted together with the staff survey of 2017, while a volunteer analysis will be carried out by the No to racism! campaign in 2017. Based on the analyses, we will introduce updates to the Equality Plan in 2018–2019. For this task, we will form a working group consisting of multiple organisational units and volunteers. To support the Plan, we will create tools and a functioning monitoring mechanism so that the Plan can be taken to the grassroots level and monitored by the employees and volunteers.

Equality means that all people are equal regardless of their gender, age, ethnic or national origin, nationality, language, religion or belief, opinion, disability, state of health, sexual orientation or some other personal feature. The principle of equality in the Constitution of Finland both prohibits discrimination and guarantees people's equality before the law. The Non-discrimination Act, the Criminal Code of Finland, the Act on Equality between Women and Men and labour legislation provide details on the prohibition of discrimination in different areas of life.

The aim of the Equality Plan is to provide the Red Cross administration, employees, elected officials and volunteers with tools to implement equality and prevent discrimination in the practical work. The Equality Plan applies to the headquarters, district offices, youth shelters, the Kontti chain, reception centres and individual branches. The Blood Service has its own equality plan. Individual units may create their own, more detailed plans based on this Plan.

The headquarters' steering committee, district executive directors, director of the shelter operations, director of the Kontti chain and branch chairpersons will be responsible for the Plan's implementation. At the operative level, all supervisors are responsible for the Plan's implementation. Furthermore, all employees and volunteers are responsible for striving towards equality in all operations.

The operations of the Finnish Red Cross are based on the seven principles, the shared values, rules and mutually agreed philosophy, vision and strategies of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The Strategy 2020 of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies also emphasises diversity as one of our key values and defines it as follows: 'We respect the diversity of the communities we work with and of our volunteers,

members and staff, based on non-discrimination and our principles of impartiality, unity and universality.'

The implementation of this Plan will create equal opportunities for working and volunteering in the Red Cross. The Plan complements the Red Cross's other HR plans and operational policies. The Equality Plan's measures must be factored in when the Red Cross's rules, plans, policies and schemes are amended or updated.

The Plan is based on the Red Cross's general policy, the policy regarding volunteers and the personnel strategy. It was drawn up using the Equality Programme of the District of Helsinki and Uusimaa, material from the Ydin project ('Increasing Equality amongst the Organisation's Volunteers') run in 2009–2010, the equality plan of Keuruu's reception centre and the equality planning guide on the yhdenvertaisuus.fi website.

The Equality Plan was approved at the Finnish Red Cross's board meeting on 14 March 2011 and updated on 23 September 2016.

Equality is about Understanding Diversity

In its simplest form, equality is about respecting others: Every Red Cross employee, elected official, volunteer and user of Red Cross services must be able to be themselves and feel they are respected the way they are. Simplistic generalisations about different age and demographic groups can prevent us from seeing people as individuals. This can cause their skills to go unnoticed and unutilised, activities to not reach people or people to not be able to join in the activities. Therefore, it is important that when enhancing equality, assumptions that limit the scope of planning are dispelled.

The promotion of equality and prevention of discrimination affect everyone in the Red Cross, and similarly everyone can have an influence through their own actions.

The main concepts related to equality:

Tolerance

Tolerance means respecting other people's thoughts and listening to all views. It also entails the fair and equal treatment of people.

Positive discrimination

Section 7 of the Non-discrimination Act defines special treatment as follows: 'This Act does not prevent measures intended to achieve genuine equality in order to prevent or mitigate negative effects from discrimination (positive discrimination), as specified in Section 6(1). Positive discrimination must be proportionate in relation to the intended objective.'

Ensuring equal opportunity does not mean that everyone is treated the same way, because all people have their individual starting points and options available to them. Some groups, such as young or disabled people, are in more danger of facing inequality. Positive discrimination refers to actions intended to ensure equal treatment of a specific group of people.

Origin, race or ethnicity

Ethnicity is awareness of one's own culture. Time alters views and their meanings. These days, humanity is no longer divided into races, but ethnicity is used to refer to the origin of an individual, if such a thing is necessary. In simple terms, ethnicity means that a certain group's members share the same origin, identify with their group and exhibit some of the same cultural traits.

Age

Age is an element that touches each and every person more clearly than any other reason for discrimination. Any one of us can be subjected to discrimination based on our age, virtually at any stage of our lives and in any cultural context. Finnish workplace barometers show that age discrimination is the most common and the most readily accepted form of workplace discrimination. Most age discrimination is indirect, which is why it can easily go unnoticed. Typically, it means giving less advantageous positions to aging people, but people under 30 years of age and even children can be discriminated against based on their age. Attitudes regarding age are often made apparent by the word choices in job announcements: derivatives of the word 'young' are highly popular euphemisms used when seeking candidates of a specific age.

Life stance

Life stance is a personal thing and affects our values and lifestyle choices. It is one of those characteristics that are not necessarily visible and do not come up in ordinary situations or during daily interaction.

Gender

Taking the gender aspect into account means that we assess the impact of our measures and decisions on women, men and different gender identities, are aware that some people do not identify simply as female or male, prevent direct and indirect discrimination based on gender and actively promote gender equality. The Finnish Red Cross also has an Equality Plan in place, as required by the Act on Equality between Women and Men, aiming to prevent gender discrimination and promote equality.

Gender refers to gendered roles, responsibilities, privileges and abilities that are affected by various social and cultural factors. That is why English uses two separate words: 'gender' to refer to the social aspect and 'sex' for the biological. Subconscious cultural elements that reduce equality are easily formed within organisations. Gathering and analysing gender-specific data is vital for identifying and rectifying any biases. Therefore, it is also important to add the option of 'other' so that no one is forced to pick a gender they do not identify with.

The structures and approaches in an organisation can either support or impair equality. In working life, experienced equality is connected to management, operational approaches and human resources, among other things, and may have to do with things such as parental leave, gendered roles, equal pay and gendered harassment. Women's difficulties in advancing their careers and men's challenges in allocating time both to work and active parenting indicate that plenty of work remains to be done to achieve equality in Finnish workplaces. Gender can also affect the way duties and roles are allocated in volunteer work. There can be no gender discrimination in volunteer work when it comes to accessing services, for example, and the specific needs of different genders must be accounted for. Fair gender distribution within various groups, such as the elected officials, administration, staff and volunteers, must be ensured. Sexual orientation describes the target of a person's romantic and sexual feelings, as well as their identity based on these feelings and actions. Because heterosexuality is the most common sexual orientation, it is

often considered to be the default one. Other orientations may be considered deviations from the norm, and thereby less desirable. Therefore, non-heterosexual individuals may encounter prejudice and subsequently be assigned a weaker status.

Family relationships

Family relationships mean relationships between underaged children and one or more parent, but also those between elderly parents and working age adults. LGBT parenting refers to families with children where one or more parents belong in a sexual and/or gender minority. Adoption is one of the ways to start a family. There is also cultural variation in what is considered to be a family.

Accessibility and ability to function

This refers to an individual's ability to operate within the surrounding society and survive in it. The terms 'accessibility' and 'design for all' are often used when talking about equal abilities to function. It is often thought that accessibility simply means the lack of barriers in the physical environment, but it can also refer to an equal access to information.

The principle of 'design for all' means that environments, services and communication are designed in a way that accounts for the differences between people. Such solutions are suitable for all people regardless of their ability to function and can be modified. An accessible environment and communication means that these are available to everyone. A missing language version of a brochure or bureaucratic language can make it difficult to understand a message. Lack of information or difficulty of finding it on a website is also an accessibility barrier.

Code of Conduct

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has defined its own ethical guidelines for disaster aid: <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/who-we-are/the-movement/code-of-conduct/>. The Finnish Red Cross has created A Code of Ethics for its employees and volunteers. This Code will be updated during summer 2016 by creating separate ethical guidelines for the employees and the volunteers. The updated Code of Ethics will be submitted to the organisation's board for approval at the same time as this equality policy.

Here is How We Promote Equality at The Red Cross

The Red Cross is committed to respecting the privacy of every employee, elected official, volunteer and service user. All of the Red Cross's HR policies and operations must be based on the idea that there are a range of family types, genders and people with varying backgrounds and abilities. Equality is based on the fact that while there is diversity we do not necessarily notice it.

This section defines the objectives and concrete measures with which the Red Cross aims to promote equality. The people in charge of the measures are: at the headquarters, the managers and supervisors in charge of each operation; in the individual branches, the executive directors and supervisors; in the youth shelters, the director of the youth shelter operations and the directors of the shelters; in the Kontti chain, the chain's director and the supervisors of each Kontti; in the reception units, the person in charge of a unit; and in the branches, the branch chairpersons.

The measures defined in the 2012 Equality Plan were focused on the headquarters. Some of these measures have been fully implemented there, but in the other units their implementation remains mostly incomplete. One example is the launch of an electronic recruitment form and systematic advertising of open positions on the organisation's website. However, even the headquarters have room for improvement when it comes to the implementation of decisions.

The equality goals within the organisation

Analysis: We will analyse how well we have achieved equality. An employee analysis will be conducted together with the staff survey of 2017, while a volunteer analysis will be carried out by the No to racism! campaign in 2017. The assessments will identify the employees' and volunteers' experiences regarding equality, in addition to which everyone will evaluate their own actions in the promotion of equality.

Plan updates: Based on the analyses, we will introduce updates to the Equality Plan in 2018–2019. For this task, we will form a working group consisting of multiple organisational units and volunteers. To support the Plan, we will create tools and a functioning monitoring mechanism so that the Plan can be taken to the grassroots level and monitored by the employees and volunteers.

Strategies: We will take equality into account in our HR and communications strategies.

Accessibility: We will improve the accessibility of our existing facilities. We will also assess the accessibility of new premises as part of their procurement process. Furthermore, we will ensure accessibility when organising events. We will grant disabled people's personal assistants free entry to events when accompanied by their clients.

Communications: We will inform every staff member and volunteer about our updated Equality Plan. The needs of different users within all stakeholder groups will be taken into account in the organisation's communications. Our chosen communication channels will be diverse and appropriate for the purpose, and they will reach people seeking information in a range of media. Our selection of service languages will be appropriately chosen. The Red Cross websites and online services will be updated so that they can be accessed and read by everyone.

Induction: In spring 2016, the organisation received its new online induction material, created based on the 2012 plan, but its implementation is still ongoing. The material contains a section about the Code of Ethics, and it will now be put into use extensively.

Training: All training provided to our employees and volunteers will include basic information about equality and the key points of this Plan. The aim of training and induction is for every employee to learn to take equality into account in all our operations.

Disability: We will develop our operations by improving the conditions for our disabled employees and clients.

Sexual orientation: We will not tolerate any discrimination, harassment or bullying due to sexual orientation in our operations.

The equality goals in the aid work

Communications: Our visual communications will paint a picture of a diverse range of operators. In our electronic communications, images will be described to the visually impaired. Our communications will use both official languages equally. We will also use simplified language and other languages as needed. Our communications and practical work will promote the idea that neither nationality nor lack of nationality has an effect on an individual's ability to participate.

Attitudes: We will pay attention to our attitudes. We will not be overly protective or condescending towards people with different backgrounds and will intervene in any discriminating behaviour. We will pay attention to attitudes in our training sessions, induction and public events.

Respect: We will respect our clients' life stances, religions, beliefs and cultures. In our aid work, we will acknowledge the recipients' skills and will aim to find use for them.

The equality goals in volunteering

Recruitment: Our volunteers will represent the diversity of the population well, and the branches will actively promote equality in all of their operations. Our approach will be active and goal-oriented to allow us to attract people with different backgrounds to volunteer.

Communications: We will use clear language, or several languages if necessary, and our communications will reach the area's residents well. The branches' communications tool will help us achieve this. We will create guidelines for factoring in equality when designing a branch's website and notifications.

Accessibility: We will ensure that facilities are equipped with clear signs and that disabled people can also access events held by a branch. Our instructions and other material created for the branches and employees as support when organising events, campaigns and similar will discuss accessibility.

Induction and training: We will create an electronic induction passport which will contain a section on equality. We will enhance the Red Cross's basic course, training for members who want to become elected officials, the shared part of Promo training and the shared part of the trainer training by introducing material about equality.

A district's support to the branches: We will include guidance on equality matters and their monitoring in our sponsorship operations' goals and guidelines. It is important that districts provide the branches with support and instructions, especially regarding multiculturalism and volunteering at reception centres.

The equality goals within the work community

Recruitment: Enhancing equality in recruitment remains one of the focal points. We will develop and widely implement a form that initiates a recruitment process and specifies the required abilities and language skills. We will determine our selection criteria so that they do

not intentionally favour or discriminate against anyone. We will value linguistic and cultural skills when making our decisions. We will expand the use of our electronic recruitment form from the headquarters to the other units. We will develop our recruitment advertisements' content in order to more clearly encourage people with various backgrounds to apply for available jobs, and we will use increasingly diverse channels to advertise our vacant positions. Every open position will be advertised at www.redcross.fi/news-and-current-affairs. We will tell the applicants about the values, principles and the Code of Ethics of the Red Cross while the recruitment process is still ongoing.

Employment: We will ensure that the terms and conditions of our work contracts are met without discrimination against anyone. As an employer, we will treat couples in registered partnerships equally with those who are married, and unregistered couples equally with those in civil unions. All of our employees will enjoy the same perks regardless of their marital status, e.g. right to a paid day off on the date a partnership is registered, right to paternal leave and right to unpaid childcare leave.

Management: We will include equality in our staff performance reviews and discuss it based on how an employee thinks equality is being achieved within the organisation and how they themselves are promoting equality through their actions.

Induction/Staff training: Accessible communications will be made part of the induction and training of staff members.

Here is how We Prevent Discrimination at The Red Cross

Discrimination

Discrimination stems from prejudice against a group that an individual represents. Open and direct discrimination is the most visible form of discrimination. Discriminatory behaviour is characterised by negative attitudes, but a lot of it is also caused by ignorance. Recognising indirect discrimination is harder, and it often refers to discrimination caused by the existing structures. This could mean, for example, that guidelines and rules apply differently to different people.

Stairs that hinder mobility or barriers in accessing information may also be discriminatory. A disabled person may be ignored when discussing their affairs, for example by talking to the personal assistant of someone in a wheelchair rather than the person themselves. If a person belongs in several groups at risk of discrimination, this is referred to as multiple discrimination. For example, if a disabled elderly person is part of an ethnic minority, they may in the worst-case face discrimination for multiple reasons. Discrimination may be one of the causes behind social exclusion.

Different treatment based on a person's attribute is discrimination. However, targeting a specific service at a specific group, such as the friend course intended for immigrants, is not discrimination. The most important thing is to understand that discrimination is not a matter of opinion. Discriminatory behaviour cannot be justified by personal beliefs or opinions.

Key concepts connected to discrimination:

Direct discrimination

A person is, has been or could be treated less favourably than someone else in a similar situation. Example: a person is not allowed to take part in volunteering.

Indirect discrimination

A person has an unfavourable status in comparison to others based on a seemingly non-biased regulation, reason or policy without acceptable grounds. Example: In order to be hired, a person must be fully competent in Finnish even if this is not needed to carry out the work.

Harassment

The intentional or actual violation of the value or integrity of a person or a group by creating a threatening, hostile, degrading, humiliating or aggressive atmosphere for a reason prohibited by law. Example: ridiculing speech, such as racist jokes.

An order or instruction to discriminate against someone

No one can tell another to behave discriminately. Example: an employer forbids the staff members from serving a specific group of people. An order like this constitutes discrimination, even before it is carried out.

Racist actions are a form of discrimination in which people are assigned unequal statuses based on their background or presumed characteristics. In connection to racism, such characteristics may be either biological or cultural and are often thought to be unchanging. It is more important to recognise racist actions than to label people as racists. Often, only the most extreme and visible forms of racism, such as violence, are recognised. However, racist attitudes can also take forms that are more commonplace, such as berating, name calling, innocent-sounding jokes, facial expressions, small gestures and exclusion from groups.

A Red Cross employee or volunteer can both discriminate or be discriminated against. What matters is that every Red Cross employee and volunteer recognises discrimination and is committed to intervene in discrimination and prevent it. No one should experience harassment or being excluded and everyone's experience of having been discriminated against will be taken seriously.

Discrimination is a problem for the whole community, not just an individual, and directly affects the work results and atmosphere of the entire organisation. Even someone who represents a so-called majority can become a victim of discrimination. When dealing with discrimination, the correct handling of the situation is equally important to finding the wrongdoers. Non-discrimination means that everyone is respected and no one needs to worry about being discriminated against.

sThe objective

How will we achieve it?

All forms of discrimination, sexual harassment, racism and bullying are prohibited in the Red Cross. Every Red Cross employee and volunteer is committed to this.

We will clearly express in all our operations, events and courses that discrimination, racism and bullying are not tolerated.

We will utilise the Discrimination-free Zone campaign in our communications by discussing it in work communities, on training courses and at events organised by the Red Cross.

The Red Cross has an established set of means for employees and volunteers to handle discrimination and disruptive incidents.

A set of jointly agreed and established approaches will be created both for the employees and volunteers of the Red Cross in order for them to prevent discrimination and harassment, to intervene in these situations and to process discrimination and harassment claims. These approaches will be made part of this Plan.

Every Red Cross employee, elected official and volunteer will be able to recognise discrimination, intervene and help the person discriminated against.

Training on identifying, intervening in and preventing discrimination will be provided for all Red Cross employees and elected officials.

Similar training will also be made part of the volunteers' trainer, group leader and Promo training.

The atmosphere of the Red Cross is open, safe and tolerant of diversity, both amongst the work communities and the volunteers.

A set of criteria for an atmosphere that is open, safe and tolerant of diversity and the measures required to achieve this will be defined together. For example, reception centres can invite asylum seekers to join as equals in the planning and carrying out of volunteer work.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Since autumn 2015, visitors to our website have been able to report suspected wrongdoing anonymously by using a so-called whistleblowing form. People may not have the courage to report incidents related to inequality or discrimination, and therefore we have provided them with this anonymous channel. All reports will be handled by an internal reviewer. The form can be found on our website at <https://www.redcross.fi/feedback>.

The success of the Equality Plan's implementation will be assessed as part of the entire organisation's annual review. The Plan's effectiveness in achieving equality will be evaluated once during every general assembly term. The Equality Plan will be updated no less than once per general assembly term.

The questions in the staff surveys dealt with the following themes about equality, on a scale from 1 to 5: More questions about equality will be added to the staff survey of 2017.

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|----------|-------------|-------------|---|------|-----|-----------------|------|------|--------------------|-----|-----|--|------|-----|
| Question | Result 2011 | Result 2014 | Toleration of difference at the workplace | 3.79 | n/a | Gender equality | 4.04 | 4.03 | Age-based equality | 4.1 | n/a | Equality of people with different ethnic backgrounds | 4.08 | n/a |
|----------|-------------|-------------|---|------|-----|-----------------|------|------|--------------------|-----|-----|--|------|-----|